

## BEYOND THE VEIL OF UNCERTAINTY: A REFLECTION ON MENTAL STRESS

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The shift in the education system due to the pandemic created a domino effect in the school as an open system. These changes altered even to the very minute aspect of the teaching and learning process.

As mentioned by Delfin et al (2021), the changes resulting from the prevalence of the pandemic burdened both the teachers and the students during the new normal. In this process of adjustment, the mental health of both groups was greatly affected. The study of Delfin (2021) divulged that the transition from a face-to-face to an online learning setup caused mental pressures and difficulties on the part of the senior high school students in Tacloban, Leyte while Cheng and Lam (2021) mentioned that teachers also experienced mental stress in delivering their tasks during the pandemic.

In this context, Thoreau stressed that uncertainties brought by things in the past and the future mattered less as compared to what is within us. The shift in the paradigm of teaching and learning has affected the psyche and soma of teachers and students during the past two years. Incidents of suicide incidents committed by both the teachers and students were broadcasted on national TV and printed in broadsheets. Alarming issues that were rooted in mental stress felt by the aggrieved parties.

In line with this, the World Health Organization (2021) released ways to combat mental stress. These steps include:

Talk with a person you trust to confide the problems and emotions that you bottled inside. This action may help you clear your crowded thoughts about the fears of the future and how to cope with them.

Take care of your body because mental health follows a fully-functioning body. Eat nutritious foods, and have plenty of rest since a sound mind follows a well-rested body. Also, stay away from abusive substances like drugs and alcohol.

Engage in fun-filled activities that may take divert your attention from worries and stress.

Reconnect with nature. If you felt that you are drowned with virtual realities and felt weary, stop using the computer, then feel the warmth of your surrounding and reconnect with real-time events.

Give your worries to God and you need to admit that you have your limitations and some things are beyond your control.

As teachers, we need to take care of our psyche and soma to ensure that we deliver quality education despite the pandemic. Remember, in difficult times only the tough survive.

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